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SUBJECT: FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER IRAKLI OKRUASHVILI
ARRESTED IN GERMANY

REF: TBILISI 2719

11. (SBU) Former Defense Minister Irakli Okruashvili was arrested November 27 in Berlin. An Interpol warrant was issued for him at the request of Georgian law enforcement after he retracted his confession and failed to attend a court hearing in November in Tbilisi. Okruashvili left Georgia November 1 (reftel) under government pressure. A Berlin state prosecutor's office spokesman said it was not decided if Okruashvili would be held in custody pending extradition. The spokesman said the Georgian government has 40 days to file the rationale for extradition and provide documentation to German authorities. The Germans plan a court hearing on November 29. Iason Chikhradze, former Head of Procurement at the Defense Ministry under Okruashvili, has also been detained.

12. (SBU) The German Ambassador to Georgia told Ambassador on November 28 that the extradition process could take many months as it is possible Okruashvili will seek political asylum in Germany. Okruashvili's wife and children are in Georgia but are known to be seeking visas to the U.K.
TEFFT